The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

Nr 9 MAY 1965 50c THE COPY

VIETNAM

THE MORALITY OF TAX RETURNS IN ITALY

SALTLICKHAM'S YOUTH

Other Foreign & Domestic Matters

The President's speech at John Hopkins added a much needed touch of sanity to the Administration's handling of the Vietnam situation.

It had begun to look as if we were determined to turn a bad situation into a hopeless one. The sudden appearance of a modicum of reason on the part of the Administration came not a moment too soon.

Involved in a war we felt we couldn't win through restricted operations, we had enlarged the field of battle. In so doing, we ignored one of the important lessons of the past two decades — that the most luxurious form of violence man can permit himself is a drastically limited war.

The restriction is not one dreamed up by clever Communists to permit them to carry out wars of liberation without fear of effective retaliation.

The imperative comes not from the Communists but from human common sense that peers into the black chasm of intercontinental ballistic terror and is smart enough to step back.

A limited war must be limited in weapons and limited in area. Once the tools or terrain of battle change significantly, a geometric progression of conflict is all too likely to occur. The original causes are forgotten and even reasonable men succumb to madness.

Limited wars are frustrating, long, complicated and inconclusive. But we can afford no greater form of military struggle unless our survival clearly depends upon it.

Until last winter our activities within South Vietnam were consistent with our stake in that strange land the other side of the Pacific. Our position was flexible and our commitment restricted.

Then our sense of frustration and impatience got the better of us. The Administration boys with TV-western mentalities convinced the President that high noon was approaching and that he had better get out on the street, prepared to risk all for the honor of democracy.

The fact that a sizable number of South Vietnamese weren't interested in saving themselves was forgotten. We told them, in effect, "We are going to save you whether you like it or not."

The fact that the Secretary General of the United Nations and most of our allies didn't share our enthusiasm for a great Southeast Asian crusade was ignored. America became noticeably estranged from the agencies and alliances she had been nurturing since the end of the Second World War.

What had started out as a minor rumble in the alleys of international politics suddenly became a holy war to defend the democratic faith and the glory of the South Vietnamese republic.

Perspective was lost. We forgot that while South Vietnam was worth

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The Idler

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Ignored

something, it was not worth everything. Just a matter of weeks after the first bombing raids to the North, leaked stories in the press analyzing how far into North Vietnam we would go if necessary were replaced by leaked stories analyzing how far into China we would go if necessary. The little nation that for years previous had been worth only a few thousand American troops suddenly became worth a world war.

If we are going to be a responsible international power we will have to become more sophisticated in our handling of problems such as Vietnam. We can expect to be involved in many unpleasant conflicts in the future. We will win some, lose some, and some will be draws.

But we can not, simply to improve our military box score, throw out other goals such as encouragement of international restraint or the development of a strengthened United Nations and effective alliances with nations whose support we need far more than that of a puppet regime in South Vietnam.

We must recognize that there are limits to the influence we can exert around the world and must make our policies conform not to a utopian concept of world salvation but to a realistic assessment of specific military and political situations. We should, to borrow from the current jargon of the Pentagon, apply political cost effectiveness rather than blind dogmatism to our foreign policy. If, in every conflict with the Communists, we become paralyzed by the fear of being called chicken, we can hardly expect to operate on a rational basis. We will, in fact, become little more than the Kamikaze of democracy.

It is said that if South Vietnam falls the rest of Southeast Asia will follow, like a row of dominoes. If this is true, then it is an argument for a continued involvement within the borders of South Vietnam. But before we adhere too strongly to a belief in the domino theory we should note that, despite our efforts in South Vietnam, a good many of the dominoes — Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia — haven't remained exactly upright.

The sensible possible alternatives in Vietnam include continuing limited

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military and economic assistance, exploration of ways of reaching a negotiated settlement, involvement of the UN, and, at worst, withdrawal. The Administration should be permitted flexibility to operate within these alternatives, choosing among them as the strategic conditions dictate.

But the Administration should not consider that it has a mandate to pursue any international conflict to whatever extreme appears convenient to the nation's military planners.

For if we fall victim to the kind of thinking that sees each confrontation of American and Communist interests in terms of a meeting between good and evil on the dusty street of a frontier town, we may, sooner or later, reach the point of high noon.

When we do, the sound we hear will not be that of a Colt revolver. And the body lying in the dirt will not be that of good or evil, but the bloodied remains of civilization.

APPROVED

WASHINGTON
MAY 1, 1970

The Federal Power Commission today approved construction of a hydoelectric plant at the foot of Capitol Hill. The Commission found that the plant, to be placed a few hundred yards from the West Front of the Capitol Building, would have "minimal effect" on the scenic quality of the area. Said the Commission in its decision:

"We find that the advantages for power-supply purposes far outweigh any negative considerations.

"Whatever may be the negative aspect of adding this powerhouse at the foot of Capitol Hill, on balance we do not believe it outweighs the public interest in the effective utilization of an unusually fine pumped-storage site."

The Commission noted that the Mall, extending past the Washington Monument to the Lincoln Memorial, provided an excellent route for overhead cable lines to Virginia. "We won't have to cut down any trees or tear down houses," a Commission member said. He added that if Lincoln's statue were moved to the south side of the Memorial a conduit could be placed through the structure for the cables.

The Commission cited as precedent for the action its decision five years ago to permit construction of a similar plant at the foot of the once scenic Storm King Mountain on the Hudson River.

From *The Times* of London we learn some fascinating details about insurance and taxation in Italy. *The Times'* man wrote:

"Though motor insurance is not obligatory in Italy, it seems from what the companies say that some people find an insurance policy profitable so long as they can be sure of a fairly regular series of small accidents. The companies maintain that they are constantly being faced with inflated bills for damages, and finding that half a dozen claims addressed to different companies are inclined to refer to the same accident."

The record belongs to a gentleman in Bari who was reimbursed ten times for the same crash. The insurance companies got a good idea of what they were up against when they started keeping a careful check of all claims. They discovered that during a six month period in Naples — according to the claims filed — there were 108 accidents for every 100 cars, a figure that seems rather high even for Italy.

The system works like this. When you are involved in a crash you invite

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FAMOUS LAST WORDS

Lyndon Johnson, in a letter to *Army Reserve Magazine* last November:

Defense of our great Nation is every American's business. We rely heavily on the Army Reserve as a significant part of our country's defense team . . .

I am confident that the Nation can rely upon the Army Reserve today and in the future as it has so often in the past.

a number of friends to put in claims with their insurance companies for the same accident. The damage is repaired by mechanics who are willing to inflate the cost of fixing the dents in return for a cut of the profit.

As *The Times* put it: "The argument justifying this practice is that the inspectors acting on behalf of the insurance company will in any event halve the claim, so that inflation is necessary to assure reimbursement of the real costs of repairs."

Taxes are handled on a similar basis. Furthermore, the practice of substantially underestimating the tax due the government has now been partially condoned by as morally conscious a publication as *l'Osservatore Romano.*

Writing in the Vatican paper, columnist Mgr. Lambruschini notes that under the present system, the government often starts "with the doubling of the figure due in order to have a strong position in dealing with the taxpayer, who for his part will tend to declare a sum below his real profits."

No moralist, Mgr. Lambruschini suggests, can be too hard-nosed about dishonest returns since accurate statements could "fatally have the consequences of irreparable damage to the man himself and to his business."

Only if the citizen goes beyond the limits of his conscience would Mgr. Lambruschini find him "guilty before God, the beginning and source of all legitimate authority."

We can be thankful that in this country we recognize the moral requirement of correct tax returns. For example, on page 28 of the Treasury Department's booklet, *Your Federal Income Tax,* it clearly states:

"Embezzled funds are income to the embezzler in the year the funds are misappropriated."

We have received another letter from Young Americans for Freedom, Inc., this time signed by Strom Thurmond. The good Senator writes:

"The National Board of Directors has set a goal of starting YAF chapters on 1000 college and university campuses by December 1965.

"The prospect of patriotic anti-communist youth groups on college campuses is truly an inspiring and heart-warming thought . . ."

You sure that's not heartburn you feel, Senator?

The AFL-CIO National Association of Letter Carriers agrees with us that postal service in this country is not as good as it should be. In fact, the union says, through its magazine, *The Postal Record,* that service "stinks."

And it asks these questions:

"How can we claim to have a 'Great Society' when first class letters regularly take a full week to travel from Washington to San Francisco, and three days from Washington to New York?

"Or when the Post Office Department spends between $3 million to $8 million a year (they don't know exactly how much) just to rewrap parcels that have been damaged and defoliated in the mails?

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Hugh Haynie . .

"But, Fella—Life Goes On"

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"Or when packages hang around post offices for half a week awaiting delivery?

"Or when business firms hand-deliver their own mail because it is cheaper and faster that way?

"Or when mail trucks must keep touring the city, because there is no place in the postal facilities to unload their cargoes of mail?

"Or when users of second and third class mail are required to pre-sort, pre-package and pre-tie their mail before entrusting it to the Post Office?"

Clear-channel Pain

Some time ago, the broadcasters of the nation made a bad mistake. They picked as their national spokesman a man of talent and conscience who had a sense of what the public interest demands.

It was a ghastly error. Leroy Collins prodded and chided the broadcasters and reminded them of their responsibilities. It didn't take long for them to decide that he was a 50-kilowatt clear-channel pain in the neck.

Now things are happily back to normal. Several thousand of broadcasting's "sound citizens" (as they modestly call themselves) were in town this spring for the National Association of Broadcasters convention.

They chose as their new leader, Vincent T. Wasilewski. His address to the convention made clear that broadcasting need not fear a return to the conscience-wrestling days of Governor Collins. Mr. Wasilewski put his finger on the real enemy of the listener and viewer.

It is not disc jockies screaming through echo chambers. It is not 27 commercials an hour. It is not the "tops in pops" that sound as if they recorded by an internal combustion engine with several cylinders missing and the others tuned to an Oriental scale. It is not misleading, superficial headlines paraded as news to the accompaniment of trumpets and sirens. It is not the incessant, grating, egomanical din of self-promotion during every unsold minute.

No, it is the well-meaning but misguided members of the Federal Communications Commission whose efforts to bring a token measure of responsibility to the airwaves threaten the very foundations of our freedom.

As Mr. Wasilewski warned:

"Oppression does not always appear in the form of a man in uniform. More often it comes clothed as a friend of freedom. It may be Government agency determined to give 'the people' what they 'should' have, or majority opinion channeled through our political processess seeking to supress minority views, or the powerful and established trying to protect their vested interests, or strong organized minorities seeking to silence opinions which they do not regard as 'socially desirable.' "

And, as we all know, no fearless, freedom-loving television network would ever try to do anything like that .

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SALTLICKHAM

What with that big report on Mississippi last month, I never did get to tell you that the ice broke up in Whosawotsit Bay long about the end of March. Mel Hiffle, who likes to go ice fishing, was the first to notice it. But we pulled him out all right.

I got my 32-footer with the Novie hull into the water April 3rd and took her for a spin out Mark Island way. Elizabeth said it was a damn fool thing for a man of my age to be doing so early in the season, but then she never did like the water. I had just got the other side of Gull Rocks when that old *pockatapockata* sound changed to *pockataurgurg* and then stopped altogether. There I was, five miles from shore, and not a soul around far as I could see.

I figured from the way the wind was blowing — and it was breezing along right strong — that eventually I'd be set back towards the shore. But I wanted to attend the evening's program at Saltlickham High School on "Teenage Values in a Changing World," and it was getting late.

What I did under the stress of that distressing circumstance you won't find in any of your basic books on nautical gadgets and dohickies. I stepped into the cabin, undressed, removed my longjohns, and put the rest of my clothes back on again. Then, real carefully, I slit my longjohns along one side from the ankles to the neck.

Next I went back topside and lashed a boat hook vertical to the starboard side of the cabin. (On the port side I already had a nice stiff radio antenna. No radio, though. That was in being repaired.)

I rigged my longjohns in between the two make-do masts and, by jeez, I had the niftiest red spinnaker this side of June Race Week.

The way the wind was blowing it took me just two hours and 13 minutes to sail from Gull Rocks back into Saltlickham harbor. I approached my dinghy from dead upwind which isn't exactly the approved method, but you've got to understand that I've never sailed a 32-foot motorboat before.

I walked home, fixed myself an Irish Sanka (doctor says coffee's bad for me) and was at the high school with Elizabeth right on time.

The real reason I went to the meeting was because I had seen a two-page ad in the *New York Times* put out by the Scott Paper Company.

In the ad there were eleven good-looking girls running towards the reader and above was a big headline:

HERE COMES TOMORROW

Then down below there were things like this:

"Here they come — the biggest generation in history; also the best-educated, the healthiest, the wealthiest. At Scott we think they will bring a wonderful new era of change and growth and progress . . .

"To us the American Girl is the one who tomorrow will be the Goddess of the Marketplace, the girl we study to please . . .

Let us report directly one fact that shines through all the figures: These girls are wonderfully like their mothers.

"They do have greater shopping skills at an earlier age, which is understandable, since as teenagers they have been spending fifteen billion dollars a year . . .

"So—let them come; the thousand, thousand girls, tomorrow's Goddesses, the mothers of generations beyond. Each running girl is moving hopefully toward adulthood with all of its promise of fulfillment; each of our children stands for wedding cakes and laughter, gifts and flowers and music —and better living.

"We will try to be ready for them."

I was glad the toilet paper people were ready for tomorrow's Goddesses. Myself, I wasn't sure, so I went to have a closer look at Saltlickham's candidates for the future's heavenly thrones.

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At the meeting, 215 adults sat listening to six teenagers discuss problems such as whether parents should be allowed to borrow the car on Saturday nights. The panel agreed that it would be better, if this situation arose frequently, for the parents to buy a second car.

"We are the future of America," one pimply-faced kid with scraggy hair remarked. "It is our parent's responsibility to open the door of fulfillment."

The parents in the audience looked thoughtful as they considered their responsibilities. Some took notes.

"Adults should try to understand our culture," another panelist said. "They had Glenn Miller and we have the Beatles. What's so wrong about that?"

Bill Wilson, sitting next to me, muttered, "Damn."

The discussion turned to other matters such as what time teenagers should come home on dates, and what they should be doing before they come home.

It was all very serious and no one suggested that there was anything strange about these youngsters being so sober about having a good time.

By the time the meeting was over I had about decided that the main thing wrong with teenagers was that too many adults were trying to use them. What with them having fifteen billion dollars a year to spend, we can't afford to let them grow up with any feeling for the natural or the real. We got to make sure they buy the latest plastic, disposable dream at 89c a throw.

We don't want kids; we want life-size Barbie dolls, with every hair, every idea, and every value right in place.

Just like the girls in the ad. I looked over at Elizabeth and was glad no one had ever told her that she was one of tomorrow's Goddesses. It had made life one helluva lot easier over the years.

—*Uncle Abner*

Mr. Nixon and other "hawks" around the country might be interested in Mme. Bounoumi. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote about her in *Nekrassov*:

"She's the government candidate. This Christian housewife, mother of twelve children, knows how to reach the hearts of the French masses. Her simple and touching propaganda could serve as an example to our politicians and to the editors of our big daily papers. Look at this poster . . . It reads: BROTHERHOOD THROUGH REARMAMENT and lower down: TO PRESERVE PEACE, ALL MEANS ARE GOOD, EVEN WAR."

The *Harvard Crimson* has brought us up to date on what students are supposed to be learning these days. The *Crimson* listed some recent Harvard exam questions:

—"Describe the development of the Indo-European vowel system into that of IV Century Attic Greek. Treat the vowels as a structured system, not as an agglomerate of isolated cases."

—"Can you imagine the conveivable Mysteries, the Persephone complex, hysteria, male envy of females, creativity, the cult of Dionysos, the effect of alcohol on fantasy, involvement in reality, and mental health?

—"What is unique about the Merriam Cooper 'Webster's—Third Edition'?"

—"Write a brief note on the history of the word 'lignum.'"

—"Discuss the rise of Kilwa."

—"You, stranded on a desert island, have completely forgotten the value of the earth's mass. Desirous of launching a geodisic earth satellite into orbit, you wish to know this quantity accurately. Having only a fully equipped physics laboratory at hand, describe how you would go about measuring the earth's mass. Answer this intriguing question concisely."

—"Describe the hats of the Bickmann family."

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THE IDLER'S JOURNAL

I have been observing the trash collection operation in my neighborhood. It is an immensely complicated procedure that I am only beginning to understand, but here's a preliminary report.

My first contact with the removers of waste came shortly after I moved back to Washington last summer. Early one July Monday morning, there was a knock on the back door. Answering it, I found a perspiring trashman who inquired, "You got any beer, buddy?"

The question was so matter-of-fact that I immediately went to the refrigerator and broke out a six-pack. As if on signal, a halfdozen trashmen appeared in the alley and the cans of Budweiser quickly disappeared. I was thanked in the same casual tone of the original question and that was the end of the incident.

I thereupon determined to become better acquainted with trash collection in order to find out if there were any other civic responsibilities I had overlooked.

In this regard, I was eventually aided by receipt of a four page memorandum on keeping my neighborhood clean. I was relieved to discover that nothing was mentioned concerning maintenance of an adequate supply of beer on summer Monday mornings. What was unusual about this document, however, was the slogan at the bottom of each page: THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CARES ABOUT YOU.

It developed that Marguerite Kelly, Captain of Democratic Precinct 63, was just trying to bring the Great Society to my back door. I appreciated it. It was the nicest thing a politician had done since City Councillor Alfred Velucci drove a sweeping machine through the streets of his Cambridge, Mass., ward to dramatize the lack of proper cleaning by the city.

Oldtime ward bosses combined their extralegal operations with a genuine concern for the personal needs of constituents. One's ward leader was a friend out of court who, because of his willingness to fix tickets or arrange individual relief from bothersome local ordinances, saved the voter the need of having a friend in court.

Today we demand that our local politicians not fix tickets or in other ways pervert the steady application of the law. But the cost of such political purity has been a loss of personal concern on the part of lower level political figures. It was nice to find a precinct leader who wanted to help get rid of any rats in my basement.

Even the police around here are interested in sanitation. One day I was visited by a constable who explained that he was afraid the D.C. Health Department would consider the 1954 Chrysler parked in my alley lot a public nuisance. He made it quite clear that he would not report me, but it did appear, since I had Rhode Island license plates and since I obviously wasn't driving an illegally registered car on the streets of the District, that my car was abandoned, a potential haven for rodents, and thus, a public nuisance.

The problem was, he went on, that the health inspectors might come around and issue me a notice directing abatement of the nuisance within five days and he certainly didn't want that to happen to me.

I analyzed his advice carefully, got my car registered in the District and have heard nothing from the D.C. Health Department. The officer had, after all, clearly indicated that rats would not reside in a car that was properly registered.

Local politicians and police do not, however, regularly concern themselves with the trash problem in my alley. This task is left to the Sanitation Division plus a suprisingly large number

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"Is it not possible that Malcolm X, the symbol of the Negro 'lower class,' may prove the symbol of the Negro himself? Degraded by racism, a criminal in retaliation; the organizer of political and economic power in a demand for recognition, the most savage and immoderate of racial rationalists: Malcolm X was all of these. Yet the last fury of hatred, his exultation in the death of Kennedy, his vengeful delight in airline disasters, opened a new state. The depths of hatred and blood lust were plumbed; the fires of wrath were burned out. What remained, one suspects, were ashes. Hatred fulfilled leaves emptiness, and it was not in the spirit of Malcolm X to be empty." (from a recent issue)

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HORSE

Thoroughbred broodmare prospect. This 3-year-old was very fast but crippled in training accident. By a son of Court Martial. Price: $600 plus stud fee. She will be bred this month. Write HORSE, c/o IDLER.

of private firms and individuals. Besides the regular Monday government pickup, various trash and garbage trucks frequent the alley to remove the contents of specific cans and boxes. I haven't quite figured this out but I believe there is a local regulation that prohibits government from encroaching too far on private enterprise and leaves a set percentage of waste for private removal. I also suspect this ordinance specifies that private collections by firms with trucks shall take place only during the hours of midnight to six a.m. Or at least that's the way it sounds.

The individual trash collectors, on the other hand, work only during daylight hours. These types push long wagons with two small iron wheels. There is one man who removes only newspapers and empty bottles (no magazines), another cardboard and a third who concentrates on rags.

My greatest admiration is for the newspaper man. I have seen him on several occasions carefully time his arrival in the alley with that of the District truck. Then, for several minutes, massive Federal power and Goldwaterite individualism work happily side by side.

After the District trashmen toss the cans up to the truck to be emptied, the waste is sifted for old *Washington Post* and *New York Times*, which are then thrown back down to the fellow with the wagon. It's a smooth operation. The District worker on the truck calls out, "here you go, paper man," and then — plop! — a stack of newsprint hits the pavement.

For the District's men, the collection of trash is not just a job; it is an art, a sport and subject for boisterous debate, accompanied by a cacaphonious chorus of clashing cans.

The first problem is to back the large sanitation vehicle into the alley. This task is made more difficult by the apparent incapacity of the driver, the one mute member of the team, to move his truck an inch without the best advice of all his compatriots.

While I have never specifically heard the cries of "Talk it up" or "Toss it here, baby" the result is still remarkably similar to the sound of a squad of athletes peppering a ball around the infield. Somehow the driver is able to choose among the often conflicting suggestions and steer his grey beast beween fence and wall.

Then the game begins. The cans are tossed back and forth with precision and grace. Occasionally a container comes back low and outside. The man on the ground grabs for it but misses. A brief, noisy critique is held and they try again. The aesthetic part occurs as the cans are returned. They are not placed back in their previous tightly bunched arrangement. Rather a free-form sculpture is created throughout the yard, with a can placed on its side at one corner to neatly balance another

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dropped upside down at the foot of the back steps. The tops are then scattered to coordinate the design and the truck, after considerably more consultation among those involved, moves on.

The enthusiastic chatter never ceases. These are men with a mission and in a city of bland, quiet bureaucrats it is a delight to find individuals who attack their jobs with such verve and volume.

The affair reaches a climax when the truck pulls out into the street again. Several of the trashmen have gone ahead to scout for other grounds of combat. The only trouble is that some have gone north and some have gone south and all have decided *their* location is the most preferable one for the truck to drive to next.

The discussion, which previously had been limited to an alley, now expands until it covers several blocks. And the call, "Over here, Joe" is immediately countered by an unseen voice far off in the other direction: "Come on, Joe, I've got it here."

Joe, that somber, silent, embattled man in the cab of truck, sticks his head out of the window, looks around briefly, assays the situation in the light of his experience, and turns right. The decision has to be made. And Joe, his ears calloused to the criticisms of his co-workers, is man enough to make it.

THE IDLER

Market Memo

Iscariot, between the heart and head
The same corrosions boil — and none can tell
How we may prove the virtue we exude,
Who lack the opportunity to sell.

—*John Haag*

Notes From India

By Diane Cherry Miller

MADRAS

The most obvious characteristic of Indian society, perhaps, is the mixture of old and new. On the streets, bullock carts, rickshaws, animals, and pedestrians mingle with automobiles, scooters, and bicycles. Open-front traders' stalls squat among modern office buildings. Old patterns of thinking mesh incongruously with new.

On the 7:30 A.M. train from Bombay to Poona, I shared a first-class compartment with several westernized native businessmen. They passed the time by reading the Bombay English-language newspaper. Yet, as I gazed out the window, I saw numerous brown bottoms turned toward the train as if in greeting. They belonged to village men and children performing in an open field the morning chore of all humanity. (The women were more discreet, choosing to engage in this bodily function privately—behind a bush.) The contrast between the "two Indias" was striking, but I soon discovered that the line between rural and urban India is not as clearly defined as it seemed in that first-class compartment of an express train.

Even in the cities and towns of India, it is common to see men and children squatting unconcerned along the streets to relieve themselves. The men usually turn their backs. The children do not bother. Except in Bombay and New Delhi, cows, bullocks, and goats wander unhampered through the main streets of the cities. Cow dung is collected by low-caste women, who mix it with a bit of straw and pat it into pancake-shaped briquettes which are dried in the sun for fuel. Human excrement, lacking natural straw content

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is useless for this purpose. It remains in the street where it is dropped.

Several small children were among the ten persons crowded into the second-class compartment designed for six that I occupied on the train from Poona to Madras. These toddlers were in no danger of wetting their pants. They did not wear any. They answered nature's call in the most natural way. No attempt was made to clean up the resulting pools or to avoid walking in them. Eventually they evaporated in the sunlight. Needless to say, when we arrived in Madras twenty-four hours later a most pungent odor effused from our compartment.

Even in the Madras Record Office, someone felt obliged to post a sign in the latrine saying, "Use the urinal not the floor or walls."

Attempts are being made to improve sanitation. The Madras city government, for example, hopes to provide a public latrine within five hundred feet of every house in lower class areas by the end of five years. But it will be difficult to achieve any significant improvement in the face of overcrowded conditions, the prevalence of animals within city areas, and a lower class which is only partially urbanized.

Nowhere is the mixture of old and new more evident than in the realm of ideas. I was astonished when an educated, westernized Indian girl told me that "there is something to the belief that if a pregnant woman looks at the full moon her baby will be born deformed."

Selig Harrison has observed that since Nehru's passing there has been "an ostentatious return to 'things Indian.' Astrologers who used to visit their ministerial clients by the back door are now frankly accepted as part of the political landscape."

I visited the home of my friend Prema, whose father is a middle-class, English-speaking government official in Tanjore. He is a liberal Brahman, educated, well-read, and deeply interested in western ideas. Yet it was at his home that I met Bala Murugam.

India's Premier

Bala Murugam came from a small village west of Tanjore. He was staying in the house next door for a short while. He was called Bala Murugam "the child of Muruga," after Lord Muruga, a popular Hindu god. Prema's father told me he had extraordinary powers.

"What do you mean, extraordinary powers?" I asked.

"He can cure people," my friend replied. "But he will help people only if he feels like helping them, not if they ask him. Once when my daughter was very ill, we took her to the hospital, but she lay in the corridor unattended. Bala Murugam heard of this and knew we were distressed. He went to the medical officer on duty, told him the girl needed attention, and said she should be moved into a room and given medicine. The medical officer immediately put her in a room and gave her medicine. And she became well! All Tanjore knows of his powers. He travels over the countryside, doing *puja* (worship) at all the temples. He never pays his fare because the bus conductors recognize his spiritual powers. One time a conductor would not let him travel without a ticket. Bala Murugam got down from the bus, and when the driver tried to

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Editor's Memo

Putting The Idler To Bed At Sea Level

We have noticed that some of the larger publications run a column in which they describe all the wonderful things they are doing to bring their readers the best possible magazine. We also have been sparing no effort. It's just that we've been too modest to tell you about it. This month, however, inspired by George Hunt and the boys, we reveal all:

We are at sea level, driving along route 114 at 36 mph. Ahead sprawls the metropolis of Warren, R. I., where we will publish this month's edition of THE IDLER.

This is no ordinary Ford pick-up truck and we are out-of-the-ordinary passengers. Our truck is rented from Avis (we can't stand dirty ashtrays), fitted out as a mobile editorial office to carry the one busily working member of THE IDLER staff, two hitchhikers and one fellow in a ten gallon hat spewing empty beer cans out the window.

At this moment we are trying to figure out whether we can make it to our destination with one cylinder missing, an overheated engine and a gas tank that registers empty. In the back, one of the hitchhikers is making airplanes out of galley proofs. The editor is trying to catch the missiles and paste them on a page to give the printer some idea of what the magazine will look like.

The purpose of our 443.1 mile trip is to close this issue in as chaotic a fashion as possible and then write it up in an Editor's Memo. We want our readers to feel the excitement of journalism. Normally our closing day for advertisements is the first of the month, but this month we held up our publication THREE WHOLE DAYS to prove to you what an efficient outfit we are. Isn't this fun?

To meet the extraordinary requirements of the issue, the sketches by John Perts were delivered from Suffolk, Va., in the depths of night by a specially trained squad of paramedics, and lifted aboard the pickup truck by the entire Washington Redskin football team.

To print this issue we used 2.6 pounds of ink, enough to ruin 365 drip-dry suits. The 70-pound antique buff velum used would be sufficient to stretch from the offices of Warren Printing Office to the funeral parlor at the other end of State St. And if all the type in this issue were laid end to end, you wouldn't have to turn a page.

Some cynics may suggest that what matters in magazine is its content, but we, riding through the Rhode Island countryside, munching on Hershey Bars and typing our final copy despite bad shock absorbers, rain and a ticket for speeding from the Connecticut State Police, know better.

We are making it through to bring you the truth. Aren't you impressed? We are.

THE EDITOR

---

drive on the bus wouldn't move! We believe he has divine power."

My curiosity aroused, I expressed hope that I could meet the boy god.

A few minutes later, half a dozen boys of various shapes and sizes came trooping into the house. After a short conversation in Tamil, they came out on the porch where I was sitting.

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Their leader was a bright-eyed eleven-year-old clad only in white shorts. He inspected me briefly, asked a few questions about me, and abruptly turned and left, his youthful followers trailing behind. This was Bala Murugam.

Prema's father asked me to take a photograph of Bala Murugam. We went next door and found the boy god flopped on the floor on his divine tummy, reading a Tamil movie magazine. Prema's father asked me to accompany us outside to have his picture taken. Bala Murugam paid no attention, as if oblivious to our presence. The adults present entreated me to photograph him anyway. I explained that I had no flash and could not take a picture indoors But when I saw how disappointed they were, I decided at least to go through the motions. Perhaps, I thought, a god has sufficient inner radiance to be photographed in the dark. No sooner had I snapped the shutter than Bala Murugam jumped up and announced that he intended to go outside and have his picture taken.

Thereafter, he seemed fascinated by me. He followed me around, laughing gaily, showing off like all little boys. To my way of thinking he seemed to be a precocious and charming but thoroughly normal child. Prema explained, however, that Bala Murugam was in his "playful mood" and that I was not seeing his spiritual side.

This reminded me of the well-known Hindu stories about Lord Krishna's mischievous antics as a child, such as when he stole the "cosmic butter" from his mother's kitchen.

The striking thing about Bala Murugam was the deference which his elders paid him. He was, indeed, treated like a god. He certainly was never reprimanded or scolded. I found that I was affected by this and that I too was treating him as if he were someone quite special Upon reflection, I could see how Bala Murugam was able to have such an impact. In the Indian religious context, where the *sadhu* or Hindu holy man is a common feature of the countryside, it is easy for divinity to be attributed to anyone who seems to be exceptional. Bala Murugam was an intelligent and unusually independent child. In the West he might have been a prodigy in some field of academic or artistic endeavor. In India he became a god and was treated as such even by my westernized friends.

My visit with Prema's family also brought home to me one of India's chronic problems—its low standard of living. Prema's father, a college graduate, has worked as a district official for over thirty years. He earns, by Indian standards, a comfortable salary—Rs. 450 ($90) per month. He has managed by careful saving to put Prema, his eldest daughter, through college and a master's degree program. Yet he has three more children behind her, and the expenses are heavy on a man ready to retire. His family of six lives in a concrete row house comprising a living-sleeping room, a kitchen, a tiny *puja* room which doubles as a storeroom, and a porch. There is a latrine in the back yard. A single naked light bulb provides illumination for the entire house. Sleeping mats are spread on the floor at night and rolled up and placed in a corner during the day.

Water for cooking and washing is heated in the back yard over an open fire. The family has been renting this house for three years. They will be moving to Madras soon where they hope to find better accommodations.

This being the lot of an educated civil servant earning Rs. 450 per month, one can well imagine the problems of a university lecturer who earns Rs. 300, or a student whose government-scholarship pays him Rs. 230, or a clerical worker who receives Rs. 75. It goes without saying that common laborers, who are lucky if they earn one rupee a day, are accustomed to hunger. When rice is scarce, as it was in Madras state last fall, these workers starve.

Perhaps it is the felt need to spread employment as widely as possible, especially at menial levels, which fosters what the Indian press calls "red-tapism" in government and business.

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The western facades of office buildings, post offices, and banks often mask infuriating inefficiency. Cashing a traveler's check in an Indian bank, for example, is a major undertaking. You are ushered into an inner office and seated by the desk of an official where you endorse the check and wait patiently. As you glance around, you see hordes of messengers flurrying from desk to desk, carrying piles of books and papers to be approved and signed. Endless forms are being filled out in multiple copies by hand. Each form must be checked and double-checked by innumerable subordinate officials, assistants, and assistants of assistants. Few typewriters are visible; they are an expensive luxury. Half to three quarters of an hour later, a peon returns with foreign exchange forms for you to complete. When this has been done and your record of foreign exchange has been stamped, you must wait another five or ten minutes to receive your money.

A similar atmosphere of inefficiency pervades the post office. One must stand in lines at separate windows to have his letter weighed, to purchase stamps, to have the stamps cancelled, and (if need be) to register the letter. It is no wonder that my Indian friends depend on peons to do ordinary tasks like sending parcels and buying train tickets.

A critical problem facing India is the fragmentation of Indian society. The "fundamental unity" of India, so fervently heralded by Indian leaders during the struggle for independence, is being challenged daily by centrifugal forces in the Union. Differences of language, religion, caste, and region all pull at the fabric of Indian unity, threatening to tear it apart. The anti-Hindi agitation which rocked the South this winter provides a striking example.

India has fifteen major languages and innumerable tribal languages and dialects. Hindi is spoken by a larger proportion of the people than any other Indian language. According to the 1961 census, 165.1 million people, 37 per cent of India's population, speak some form of Hindi. During the first years of independence, nationalist fervor was high and pressure for a "national language" was intense. Hindi was the leading candidate for this position. In spite of opposition from non-Hindi speaking areas, a provision that Hindi would become the sole "official" language of the nation on January 26, 1965, was incorporated into the 1950 constitution. The vote was 78 to 77. The apprehensions and objections of non-Hindi speaking states forced a reconsideration of this policy. The Official Language Act of 1963 declared that English "may continue to be used in addition to Hindi."

Nevertheless, as Republic Day 1965 approached, tension spread throughout the South, fed by rumors of a "Hindi takeover" in the central government. Students in Madras state were particularly anxious because in Madras, unlike the other southern states, Hindi is not a compulsory subject in the secondary schools. If jobs in the central government were to depend on knowledge of Hindi, these students would be at a marked disadvantage. Various student groups and the D.M.K. (Dravida Munetra Kazhagam), the major political opposition party in the South, named Republic Day as a "day of mourning" and planned to fly black flags and to stage demonstrations indicating their strong opposition to Hindi. But the police cracked down hard, arresting the leaders of these groups and prohibiting all demonstrations.

These measures only spurred the anti-Hindi forces on to greater efforts, resulting in further agitation, arrests, and bloodshed in the days that followed. Schools and colleges were ordered closed until February 8 in the hope that feelings would abate in the meanwhile. But the central government failed to assuage the South's fears, and February 8 marked the beginning of renewed violent demonstrations.

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By the week's end, three students had immolated themselves, one had committed suicide by poison, and an estimated sixty-six persons had been killed in police shootings. (This is an extremely low estimate; it is probable that the number killed was in the hundreds.) Over two million dollars worth of damage was inflicted on the railroads alone, and buses, post offices, and telegraph lines were also objects of attack. In Madras city, all stores and shops voluntarily remained closed in protest against Hindi. Public services were completely disrupted. Two Union cabinet ministers, whose home is in Madras state, resigned in protest at the central government's failure to act. Thus, the establishment of Hindi as the official language, which was to "unify" the country, only succeeded in emphasizing India's disunity.

India's problems are more visible than her potential. But encouraging developments cannot be ignored.

From time immemorial, the subcontinent has been scourged by epidemics of smallpox, malaria, and cholera. Today mass inoculation programs have succeeded in sharply reducing the incidence of these diseases and preventing those cases that do occur from triggering epidemics. Smallpox vaccination scars have become common on arms of Indian children. Efforts have also been made to improve the water supply. The cement-lined "government well" is now found in many villages.

Sweeping programs to replace inadequate housing in urban areas are underway. In Madras state, for example, over 100,000 units were built in 1964. These modest homes provide a living-sleeping room for each family and a kitchen and indoor flush toilet for every two families. Each family is charged only one rupee per week, which is within the means of even the lower income groups.

At the time of independence, only 5 per cent of the population was attending Indian schools. The Indian constitution declared that within ten years the government would provide free compulsory education for all children through age fourteen. Although this ambitious aim was not realized, the gains have been substantial. By 1961, over 11 per cent of the population was enrolled in school. Madras, where only 3 per cent of the school-age population was enrolled at the time of independence, was the first state to provide free compulsory education through the eleventh standard. Today, 65 per cent of its school-age youngsters are actually attending school. Gradually, the extension of free education is raising the literacy rate. In 1951, only 17 per cent of Indians could read and write. By 1961, the figure had reached 24 per cent.

The Indian government has depended heavily on encouraging local responsibility in its efforts to solve agricultural problems. To this end, "village-level workers" have been sent to help villagers deal with local conditions and make the best use of local resources. By means of these workers, backed by agricultural extension units and various schemes of community development, the government hopes to raise the quality of farming techniques and to promote animal husbandry. An important contribution to hopes for improvement both in agriculture and in industry has been the expansion of hydro-electric and irrigation facilities. Two major dams have been completed; four multi-purpose hydro-electric projects are now being built. These facilities will increase the dispersion of industry away from the formerly dominant centers of Calcutta and Bombay. Already considerable movement in this direction may be noted. Madras state had almost no industry in 1947. Today it is the home of 350 industries of which 75 are officially classed as "large," that is, having capitalization in excess of $4 million. The huge Neyveli lignite project in Madras exemplifies the multi-national scope of foreign aid to Indian development; the United States, the Soviet Union, West Germany, East Germany, France, and Japan have all contributed to it. The

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decentralization of industrial development has coincided with a shift of emphasis away from consumers' goods in the direction of producers' goods.

The favorable impact of all these developments will be negated unless India takes vigorous steps to curb the birth rate of its rapidly expanding population. There are public and private family planning centers throughout the country. Mobile units reach the rural areas where birth control information is most needed. A large number of vasectomies, encouraged by cash incentives, have been performed. Progress has been made in the introduction of a cheap and effective intrauterine device whose use is especially suited to a largely illiterate population. But the government has not yet made the firm commitment to a policy of promoting widespread birth control which will be necessary to keep population growth within manageable limits. The Bureau of Family Planning has been plagued by ineffective leadership. During the five-year plan that ended this year, less than half of the funds allotted to family planning were expended. There are indications that the Bureau will soon be upgraded to the Chief Secretary level. With increased prestige and greater budgetary independence, it may be able to implement its program more forcefully.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Flotsam and Jetsam: While the United States continues to pay little attention to its declining maritime industries, Peru has quietly become the world's largest fisherman, surpassing even Japan which has had the record catches every year since 1948.

Where are we? Loping along in fifth place behind Peru, Japan, Red China, and the Soviet Union, in that order . . .

Antoni Gronowicz, whose poem "The Emigrants' Letter to the Fatherland" appeared in the March issue, is an American poet, novelist and playwright. His books and plays have been translated into seventeen languages.

Washington: Another Miami Beach?

By DONALD W. VELSEY

The author, a Washington architect, recently returned from a year's stay in Miami, Fla. This article originally appeared in the CAPITOL HILL NEWS, *the monthly paper of the Capitol Hill Community Council. We thank the* CAPITOL HILL NEWS *for permission to reprint the piece.*

Soon after last year's election, the *Washington Post* carried a very earnest letter from a lady who was obviously a disappointed voter. Much distressed by the fact that Americans had rejected a living example of their heritage, she wrote "Never before have the grass roots been so aware of their heritage and no one need think now that the symbol has been defeated that the grass roots will return to their Rip Van Winkle sleep. No sir, once realizing how much of their heritage has been lost, we will continue our battle to retain our heritage for our children." A good case can be made for saying that she and her "grass roots" have no understanding of what this country's political heritage really is. This misunderstanding of history, this attempt to build bogus new realities, is not only obvious in our current political thinking, but also in the absurdities we parade under the name of good taste these days.

Returning from a year in Miami, Florida, whose Beach someone has aptly named "Dream Dump USA", I expected to find Washington all I had remembered it to be — the epitome, if not consistently of good taste, at least of *real* taste. Alas, a drive through the city today discloses an alarming and consistent pattern. Miami Beachism has spread to the District of Columbia. Through jazzy

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Hugh Haynie . .

"You Let 'Em Walk And Soon They'll Want To Be Treated Like People!"

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new construction, thoughtless restoration and chi-chi renovation, we are in danger of losing Washington's architectural heritage of real taste: buildings which may not be beautiful, but at least have the real character of their times. This loss of vintage atmosphere and character is not the tragedy it otherwise would be if new buildings had strong new character of their own, reflecting the best of the time and place of construction, or if the renovations respected what previously existed and enhanced it with sensitive contemporary treatment. But the eye-catching glitter of Miami Beach and the American roadside, calculated to inspire us to enjoy a really luxurious (swinging) time at the Fontainebleau or McDonald's Hamburger Stand, has appeared here. It has no connection to our past and it threatens to saddle us with a fake new heritage for the future. While many Americans concern themselves with the loss of their political and spiritual heritage, who among them is concerned about the corruption of their visual, architectural heritage?

How have we perverted our 18th century heritage of honest and functional colonial buildings, and elegant yet simple Georgian ones?

Item: An inn on Wisconsin avenue in Georgetown has been laughed at discreetly since its opening a few years ago, but those obsequious darkies in yellow tuxedos and Auntie Mame hats still blow their whistles in the street to summon taxicabs, and the restaurants named for three or four or however many British kings still do a big business.

Item: There is a brisk trade in American Heritage Eagles to be tacked up on the 19th century doorways of those residents of Capitol Hill and Georgetown who would have preferred to buy a "Colonial" or "Federal" place but are making do with the 19th century instead.

Item: There is a tendency in many restored houses to write out the street address in a Williamsburg-y script, e.g. "two hundred twenty-nine sixth street south east." I'm not quite certain what this sort of thing has to do with the 18th century, but it seems to appear only on houses whose owners are attempting an 18th century motif. The more recent connection to the spelling out of numbers on luxury automobiles (like the Jaguar Mark Two and the Oldsmobile Ninety-Eight) is perhaps the more valid one.

Item: There are some mighty silly looking windows in both Capitol Hill and Georgetown. They are good 19th century windows, generously sized because at last, with technological advances of that time, large sheets of glass could be installed in private houses. What have we done to them? We've split them up into many small "Colonial" panes which destroy the balance of scale between the heavy masses and dark voids which is one of the things that gives a house of that period its special character. We've flanked these large and bold windows with puny wood shutters, again for "Colonial" effect. Too often the shutters would come nowhere near covering the whole window if they were hinged and could be moved. We forget that these shutters had a real function once.

Miami Beach and spots far far removed from the centers of the early east coast colonies capitalize on this common American nostalgia for the 18th century by giving us colonial motels, gas stations, and liquor stores. But we in Washington should know better. When one is not fortunate enough to own an 18th century building, there is no point in tampering with a newer one to make it look that old. The results are ludicrous.

As noted above, it is the fashion to turn 19th century buildings into 18th century ones where possible. Where not possible we use them as backgrounds for perverted fairy tales of luxury and elegance dreamed up by interior decorators, fashionable real estate firms, and speculative apartment renovators.

Item: A real estate agency with interests in the Kalorama area "does

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over" large houses and large apartments into small apartments, with lobbies covered in red velvet wall paper and hung with Florentine wall sconces. These small apartments have Bahamian Plantation Shutters over their pullman kitchens with French Provincially styled appliances. They have vinyl tile floors laid in a Renaissance Italian black and white pattern. The only thing American is the rent.

Item: The "steak house" restaurant is the gastronomic answer to current hankering for 19th century frontier days of Hi-Ho-Silver-down-by-the-old-corral. But wait, one of our better known charcoal pits has developed an oddly split personality. Besides the usual stuffed animals and wagon wheels we are treated to *two* out-door crystal chandeliers, enough wrought iron to cover all the balconies in the Vieux Carre of New Orleans, and plastic tropical plants on the roof.

Item: Good old 19th century Capitol Hill, along with other places where it is less obvious, is beginning to look suspiciously Mediterranean.

Will we become the Positano of the Potomac without Italian topography or sun to help? Those honest stones and bricks laid from Grant to McKinley are now pink, yellow, green, and lavender. Perhaps this is our Provincetown heritage, which, although 20th century, is at least American. But even that has no place in Washington. The roughest, most masculine Richardsonian Romanesque piles in town are now blushing in fresh coats of puce. One must admit that it goes well with all those monogrammed striped awnings with tassles on them. And if it sells in Miami, why not here?

What about our current new building? Are we paying sufficient respect to past architectural heritage while at the same time expressing the realities of our current society? With the exception of some good downtown office buildings and the Southwest redevelopment, we seem to be showing only a perverted interest in the best of our past while displaying the very worst of our present.

Item: There is a new apartment building on New Hampshire avenue near Washington Circle with a doorman dressed up in what looks like a Parisian policeman's formal uniform. He stands guard in the lobby, flanked by two grotesque five foot high electric wall torches in Neo-Fall-of-the-Roman-Empire-Boudoir Style. The building is named after a former Italian kingdom in the French Alps.

Item: Most of these apartments outdo each other in "tastefully elegant interior appointments," but perhaps the funniest can be seen in the lobby of a place on R street N.W. which features a circular divan tufted in wicked red plush of the type associated until now with wicked San Francisco's 19th century brothels. Now Washington ladies sit primly on this divan waiting, not for strangers, but for their husbands to bring the car around. It must be admitted that even one of our best known real designers has been tempted by this floozie form. But at least Eero Saarinen kept his circular divans at Dulles black. Someday perhaps they'll be in the McDonald's Hamburger Stands too.

All the items listed above are symptoms showing that too many people, even here in the nation's capital, have no understanding of what our real American heritage is. Our craving for elegance and luxury (which surely is *not* traditional) has resulted in an ignorant perversion of traditional American and European values by merchants, decorators, salesmen, and stylists, all seeking to snag a little of that wealth which we as a nation are so lucky to be able to throw around.

We have a duty to improve upon the past and to impose our current thinking and taste on our environment. Future generations will do the same thing to what we leave behind. Change, then, should not disturb us. Our conservative lady and her "grass roots" must be paid homage by conjuring up weak and half-baked sym-

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bols, whether political, architectural, or otherwise. It is a dynamic heritage of solving problems of every kind with an appropriateness that reflects our skills, our materials, and our times.

Here & There

by Lorelei

FEDERALSBURG, MD.

There are times when one has to admit the world isn't as beautiful as we are made to believe. One crisis after another — never a really peaceful week or even day. The steady flow of bad news of violence, and danger, and complicated snafus around the world can become a real bore. Sitting on a powder keg for so long makes one wish it would either explode or just collapse and extinguish its own fuse.

I am looking for peaceful bits here and there in the papers and I usually find them in a corner of the comic pages of my *Washington Post*. A veterinarian, Dr. Miller, conducts a column called "The Wonderful World of Animals," in which he answers questions sent to him by pet owners. It is amazing what kinds of animals are somebody's pet. Snakes and spiders, fish and fowl, tiger cubs and baby polecats, etc. Most of the questions are sent in by children who have unusual pets and problems.

We have reached a point in our great society where the world of animals seems more reasonable and digified than the world of people.

I haven't seen a snake in two years. Not that I hanker for the sight or company of snakes, but I don't have that hysterical fear of them most people seem to have, especially not of the harmless reptiles that used to wander about our fields and occasionally into the chicken houses to feast on eggs. These occasions were the only ones that produced conflicts between us. So I would kill the thief and then feel remorseful. I feel sorry for snakes. Everybody hates them. Famous paintings always show them having a woman's foot on their neck. Whenever they cross the path of a human they get murdered. The very sight of a reptile, even if only ten inches long, causes a panic and arouses the killing instincts of man.

But over the years I have learned to tolerate them provided they kept out of the house and out of hen's nests. And for four years we had a wonderfully efficient rat trap in the form of a six-foot black snake who lived in the barn loft and spent his nights catching rats in the stables. He was set upon by an ignorant human who killed him and then the rats moved in on us and it takes my six cats to keep them away. Even so, the best of cats cannot follow a rat into his hole. A snake can.

Dr. Miller in the newspaper column often gets inquiries from people, probably small boys, who have pet snakes. So I learned something a few weeks ago. This little boy wrote to the doctor that he had a wonderful pet black snake (they do make affectionate pets) and while he was petting him one day he found that there were "bugs" on the pet. So he just grabbed the can of flea powder that he used on his dog and sprinkled the snake generously, and the fleas or bugs died but so did the poor snake. Just flopped over and gave up the ghost. The boy wanted to know why and how come? And this is what Dr. Miller said: snakes are cold-blooded creatures and cannot stand pesticides, insecticides, etc.

So then, here is the reason we don't have snakes around here, even in the early spring months when they were often to be seen.

In her book "Silent Spring," Rachel Carson didn't mention the snakes, or anyway I didn't read about it. Since snakes have to suffer in silence I guess nobody noticed. We did

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notice that fewer birds were singing and fewer bees were humming. I guess I just missed carrying on one-sided arguments with black snakes who snooped around here. With a long stick and a few persuasive words it is a simple matter to convince a snake it would be healthier for him to find some other place to sun himself than a pile of bricks in the back yard. Mostly they are paralyzed with fear, waiting for the minute of doom, and are only too glad to be allowed to wriggle away out of sight.

According to the vet's answers, there are hordes of little boys who have extraordinary pets, even rattlesnakes and lizards and other repulsive creatures who are all what's left of long vanished eras when men had not yet appeared on the scene.

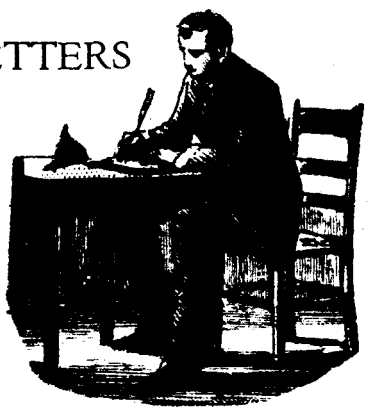
How anyone can make a pet of a spider is something I cannot assimilate. But some do. Personally I would rather have half a dozen well-behaved black snakes cavorting in the sun in the middle of the yard than have a big fat spider climbing on me. They are silent also and pesticides do not seem to bother them.

Wasps are one of the things that make me dread the coming of Spring — wasps and thunder storms, and heat and dust and having to break my back making a garden only to see it wilt in the hot sun and die for lack of rain.

Also house cleaning and window washing, all parts of Spring I would rather do without.

After listening to what things are going on in this "beautiful world" of ours, one can easily believe that many animals have better sense than humans have. They are less cruel and much more democratic and tolerant. One has to wonder also what has happened to release in humans all the savagery we smugly figured no longer existed. It is still there for anyone to see and hear about. If I should see a snake this spring, I won't go for the flea powder . . . I will just let him go on his own peaceful pursuit.

LETTERS



POSTAL SERVICE

You might like to know that I have received hundreds of letters from persons throughout the country relating their personal sad experiences so far as mail service is concerned. Many letters have been received from postal employees who handled the mail, and they are unhappy because they can no longer take pride in their work, due to circumstances beyond their control. I firmly believe the service is wretched and getting worse every day. Postal managment should face the facts and admit our present postal service is not what it ought to be nor what it could be.

The information you provided (March issue) is additional evidence that improvement is long overdue. Congress must take a long look at what has happened to our postal service and then act to bring about some changes.

Glenn Cunningham
Member of Congress

PLEASED

I want you to know how pleased the members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights have been with the coverage given our recent public hearings in Mississippi (April issue).

M. Carl Holman
Information Officer
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

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BOOKS NEEDED

Editor's Note:

Lew Walling was a friend of ours killed early in the fighting in Vietnam. We happened to see a news clipping some months back that mentioned a library being opened in Nigeria in honor of Lew.

The library, established at Our Lady of the Apostles Secondary School, was in need of books.

We wrote Samuel B. Abbott, a Peace Corps Volunteer who has helped set up the library, and asked what sort of books were desired.

Since some of our readers might be interested, we print below a portion of Mr. Abbott's letter:

The library stands in need of books on African history, *new* books in the field I should add, whose viewpoint is not colonial; geography books, particularly travel and picture books of a non-textbook sort; and books on biology, chemistry and physics (both reference and textbooks) suitable for a not too advanced high school student in the States. A further possibility is simple French readers and story books.

Shipping costs from the States are not prohibitive although definitely a factor in sending more than one hundred books or so. It might be better to encourage any interested donor in presenting the school with a check so that the librarian could order from this side of the Atlantic. They would be marked with the bookplate and an accounting of titles purchased given to the donor. On the other hand, favorite books and second hand books are welcomed.

I hope you'll agree that a library in a foreign land is a good recollection of a man who read widely and travelled widely.

Samuel B. Abbott
U.S. Peace Corps
Our Lady of Apostles
P.O. Box 202
Yaba, Nigeria

Checks should be marked "Our Lady of Apostles Sec. School, Principal"—Ed.

The Little Literature

By A. Falleder

MILTON & CROMWELL

At rise: The London Loyalist Club game room. It is two a.m. Sitting at a table is John Milton. He is alone. His eye-shade and the felt table covering are the same color green.

Milton
Youse guys gonna partake in anudder hand?

Cromwell
(has just entered room)
Don't you ever go home?

Milton
Wid all dem daughters?

Cromwell
Jack . . . talk Latin or French or something . . . I can't understand a word of your English.

Milton
I ain't mastered the vulgate.

Cromwell
It's a shame . . . you'd go places.

Milton
How'd I knew . . . know . . .

Cromwell
That's better . . .

Milton
My Governor thinked Latin was here for good.

Cromwell
How come you write those nifties in English?

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Milton

Business is business.

Cromwell

. . . I could use a man like you.

Milton

Gon inta greetin' cards?

Cromwell

Jack!

Milton

A . . . Calendars?

Cromwell

I'll deal.

Milton

Well . . . ?

Cromwell

It's a non-profit organization.

Milton

And the figure?

Cromwell

You talk better now.

Milton

Business is business.

Cromwell

Uh, huh.

Milton

. . . and the account?

Cromwell

A large English house . . . ah er-a clothing, agriculture . . .

Milton

I could most likely handle that in Latin.

Cromwell

Pretty soon, Jack, you'll be able to marry them all off.

finis

WOLFE IN THE SQUARE

At rise: Washington Square Park. The university Leninist Alliance members march boldly with their signs. The placard mottoes read: "We are not educational scabs," "The ten o'clock scholar earns a dollar" and "Hot Chestnuts 10c." It is the time of the first recession. Thomas Wolfe is sprawled out on two benches. One hand is correcting freshman themes—with the other hand he scribbles along inside an egg crate. The Hot Chestnuts man stops and starts reading from the egg crate.

Wolfe

Great huh?

Chestnut Man

Ten cents—It's hot.

Wolfe

I also do plays.

Chestnut Man

(moving on)

Three bags for a quarter and in your case I even take off the shells.

Wolfe

(into the egg crate)

The Wholeworlds . . . and sounds of the city made my ears in the devil. And you can't go home, cha, cha, cha.

Ice Cream Man

(In summer uniform with puttees and lanyard)

Chestnuts goes with Ice Cream.

Wolfe

You can't go home cha, cha, cha ice cream.

Ice Cream Man

Strawberry, Vanilla, Fudge.

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Wolfe
The strawberry and vanilla was over the thousand jangling devils of depletion weariness that tried to pull her upon the epic poetry of beauty and repose out of struggle and Fudge. Can't though.

Ice Cream Man
. . . and maybe you'll get a lucky stick . . .

Wolfe
Luck. Did you say luck, soldier?

Ice Cream Man
I'm in the Ice Cream army and we go home at night. You wanta Ice Cream.

Wolfe
You can't go home *again*, cha. cha, cha.

Ice Cream Man
Why not I paid *the rent*, Lindy Hop.

Wolfe
Dirty city . . . City I pray with your many varied tenements and other units . . .

Ice Cream Man
Apple knocker.

Wolfe
(with deep conviction)
I wouldn't have gotten a lucky stick anyhow.

finis

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Yankee Stay Home

by Edward P. Morgan

UDALL — Looking Homeward

The government's efforts to play mother hen to us civilian chickens sometimes look a little ridiculous but this time sheer brillance has come home to roost. In effort to keep the nest from being further defeathered, dollar-wise, the Johnson administration is counseling American tourists to stay home and in that connection it has banned the display of those seductive foreign travel posters in U.S. passport offices.

That is a canny and courageous first step. But now it remains for official Washington, if the Treasury will forgive the expression, to travel the next mile and circulate anti-travel posters. "Stay away from sinful Paris," one of these might caution. "Visit Las Vegas and be corrupted and bankrupted in your own backyard."

From the ABC Radio program "Edward P. Morgan and the News," sponsored by the AFL-CIO.

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"Beware of Bologna and its fattening Italian pasta," another warning to the American gypsy could read, "Patronize Poison Pete's Roadside Tavern on the edge of town." The admonitory opportunities are unlimited and in the process they can conveniently uncement the thin layers of international amity that have been patched together in this jet age of the instant journey since World War II. "Why visit castles on the Rhine?" I can see another official stay-at-home bulletin demanding, "when at hardly higher cost you can witness pollution in the Potomac and glimpse the attractions, sightly and unsightly, in your national capital as well?" Of course no bureaucratic brainwashing campaign against wonderlust abroad can be complete without a reminder that they do not have American plumbing in Great Britain.

The danger to this approach, however, is that it could backfire. We know that these insidiously clever foreigners cannot be trusted. Undoubtedly, they would mount a campaign of counter-propaganda which could conceivably put the fluttery dollar to even farther flight. Visualize, if you will, the subversive message of, say, a London hotel which craftily admits it does not have American plumbing but does have those steam-heated bath towel warmers and certain other porcelain appurtenances, popularly borrowed from the French. The Greeks may have a word of humble apology for the lack of grandeur of the Athens airport but this can only be calculated to demoralize the American domestic traveler who has to walk half way across the continent, so it seems, before he reaches the gate of embarkation for his own flight.

The Swiss and the Japanese, you may be sure, will be diffident about the modest mileage of their respective railway lines and then throw in an inverted dig at the quality, if that is the word, of our rail travel by mentioning such unheard-of features as smooth roadbeds, clean trains and impeccable service.

Indeed it sometimes seems to me that the American travel industry must lie awake nights inventing still more superficialities to substitute for service. Only yesterday I alighted in Washington from one of those chromium-colored crack special trains from Miami which featured television, moving pictures, radio, get-together games, songfests and hostesses with a saccharine Southern accent in what was wantonly called the "Rec" or recreation car. I would glady have settled for the simple comforts of a less jostling ride without the desperate efforts to make me feel that I was viewing home movies in my living room or attending a bingo game in the church basement. I could stay home to do that.

These travel people are so solicitous of your comfort that they make you squirm. Last week on a flight west, my seat companion complained that he had no sooner boarded his early morning plane at New York than the stewardess sweetly demanded whether he wanted lobster thermador or beef tenderloin for lunch. "How in the world do I know?" he snapped. "I haven't had breakfast yet." It turned out there wasn't any lobster and he had roast duckling instead. What we both would have enjoyed would have been fewer lumps in the turbulence and a second helping of elbow room.

Maybe this patriotic appeal to see America first will tend to improve these matters but I am not so sure because I am not so sure what it is we seek in our national restlessness. "Look homeward Americans," Interior Secretary Steward Udall admonished 900 businessmen at a meeting in New York City. "Americans who have visited the memorable monuments in Washington," he argued, "will better grasp the real meaning of Trafalgar Square and the Arc de Triomphe."

Would that it were so and maybe it will be and the dollar made sounder in the bargain. But I wonder if we are adding depth to our vision as well as breadth as we move around at home or abroad. The other day a friend of

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mine had two suitcases stolen from his car. After he had filed his insurance claim, the agent called him, perplexed. "What's this item listed, 'books'?" he asked. "I read as I roam," my friend said. "Can't you change the entry to 'camera', the agent pleaded, "everybody takes pictures."

I am as anxious as the next fellow to save the dollar from General de Gaulle but I am not confident that narrowing our horizons is the best way to do it. And what if the campaign is a success and the world doesn't miss us? What if those foreigners, spared the American tourist invasion, say, as they breathe their relief, "Yankee, STAY home."

Gleanings

Population Control . . .

By the time of Christ, the earth's population was one-quarter billion; by 1830 it had risen to one billion; by 1930 — a short 100 years later — it was 2 billion; it has taken less than 35 years to pass the three billion mark.

At present growth rates, by 2000 A.D. our population will have doubled to 6.6 billion. In less than 70 years it will have quadrupled, to 12 billion.

Demographers project our growth to the astronomical figure of 150 billion people by 2150 A.D.

In America, the growth rates are nearly as high. By the year 2000 A.D., the U.S. population will have nearly doubled: An increase from the present 190 million to around 340 million.

Here in the United States, we are all aware of parents who have families that are larger than they want and can raise properly. Children in such cases may grow up unwanted, or financially deprived, or educationally stunted. Parents may face a life of constant struggle, anxiety and failure.

Such families often neither know about family planning information nor can they afford to put such information into practice. In many cases, it is precisely the families which most need to know about the option of family planning to which such information is not available.

Abroad, the human problem is equally harsh. In many nations, still struggling to bring their standard of living up from a bar subsistence level, any economic advances or increases in food production may be more than offset by population increases. A nation may strain to increase production by 12 per cent over five years, only to find that population has grown by 15 per cent, leaving its citizens worse off than before.

In the face of this situation, what has the government done? Something, but not much.

The 1963 Foreign Aid Bill authorized funds "to conduct research into the problems of population growth." But there was a $6 million ceiling placed on all types of research, and Senator Gruening estimates that only $130,000 was spent on population problems. While the U.S. government is spending around $15 billion a year on research, around $4 million is being spent on medical research in fertility and related fields.

Any accurate summary of what the government has done or is doing is unavailable because of poor coordination and reluctance to speak frankly.

The State Department and the Agency for International Development have been providing assistance on population and demographic problems to those countries which formally ask for help. But here again, the impact of these programs is limited, partly because the data are lacking, partly because much research has yet to be done, and partly because information is not fully coordinated.

The government's activities in this field, then, are uncoordinated and often insufficient to meet the pressing need.

—*Rep Paul Todd*

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BACK-ISSUE INDEX

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ABOLITION OF PROPERTY — What does property mean? Is there any left? Lewis Smith presents an interesting thesis. (Feb. '65)

CONGRESS — Review of legislation not acted upon by the 88th Congress (Jan. '65) OOP

DESALINATION — Background report on government's program (Feb. '65)

DRAFT—Sen. Gaylord Nelson argues for an end to the draft. (Jan. '65) OOP —Why servicemen don't reenlist. (Feb. '65)

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD — Rep. Wright Patman examines some of the deficiencies in the Federal Reserve system (Dec. '64) OOP

FICTION—Capital Romance, By A. H. Berzen. (March '65.)

FOREIGN POLICY — Speech by Sen. Fulbright on the need to build bridges of accommodation to the Communist world. (March '65.)

MISSISSIPPI — Issue devoted to racial problems of the State. (April '65.)

POSTAL SERVICE — A report on the deteriorating state of the mails. (March '65.)

RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING — Edward P. Morgan comments. (March '65.)

VOTING REGISTRATION — Why millions are disenfranchised by restrictive registration laws (Oct. '64)

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